MOUNT POPE
PROVINCIAL PARK

PURPOSE STATEMENT AND ZONING PLAN

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Approved by:

John Metcalfe
Regional Manager
Environmental Stewardship Division

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Nancy Wilkin
Assistant Deputy Minister
Environmental Stewardship Division

Date:

MOUNT POPE PROVINCIAL PARK
Purpose Statement and Zoning Plan

Mount Pope Provincial Park protects a forested limestone mountain and Stuart Lake shoreline 7 km northwest of Fort St. James. Mount Pope dominates the skyline north of Fort St. James, and is a local and regional destination for recreation.

Mount Pope Provincial Park is comprised of 2,030 ha of steep rocky terrain, with Douglas-fir and mixed forests throughout. It is situated within the Nechako Lowland Ecosection and the Sub-Boreal Spruce biogeoclimatic zone. The park has very high wildlife habitat values. The area is predominantly limestone and supports unusual habitats including caves, bats, garter snakes, and some uncommon birds such as blue grouse and Clark's nutcracker. Unique plant species dependent on alkaline soils and steep aspects are found in this area, with some species found outside their normal range.

The steep south-facing, Douglas-fir forested slope of Mount Pope provides valuable mule deer winter range, some of the best in the Prince George region.

Recreation values are high, and activities include hiking, wildlife viewing, cross-country skiing, rock climbing and hunting. The Mount Pope Recreation Trail, originally managed by the Ministry of Forests, runs approximately six kilometres to the summit, and offers interpretation via a brochure. This trail followed the route of a native lookout trail, and was built in 1890 to access a forest lookout. A gazebo at the top of the mountain offers a panoramic view of the mountains to the north, and the agricultural valley to the south. The trail is heavily used from mid-May through to the end of September.

The Fort St. James area and Mount Pope have a rich cultural heritage which reflects past and present uses by both aboriginal and non-aboriginal people. Mount Pope was first used by the Carrier people as a vantage point to watch for hostile parties coming down Stuart Lake. On the sheer rock faces along Stuart Lake, aboriginal people recorded numerous pictographs, and later, Simon Fraser's signature was etched in rock to record his arrival in New Caledonia. Fort St. James just south of the park, was established in 1806 by Simon Fraser, and was not only the main fur trading post in the area, but was considered the capital of New Caledonia.

The mountain was named after Major Franklin L. Pope who, while surveying a route for the Overland Telegraph Line in 1865, became separated from his party and had to spend the night alone on the mountain. In the 1920's a telegraph line was put in when once again the peak was in use as a lookout point, this time as a Forest Service fire lookout. The lookout was removed in 1972.

Mount Pope Provincial Park protects cultural heritage features, including pictograph sites along the shore of Stuart Lake, the signature thought to be Simon Fraser's, and the historic lookout trail.

Mount Pope was locally promoted as a candidate for protection, and was identified as a Goal 2 Area of Interest through the Protected Areas Strategy. Protection was supported by the Fort St.

James LRMP which was approved on March 11, 1999, and the park was established in January 2001.

Primary Role
The primary role of Mount Pope Provincial Park is to provide regionally significant recreation opportunities to the community of Fort St. James and outlying communities associated with this prominent landform feature. Activities include hiking, wildlife viewing, caving, beach activities, cross-country skiing, nature study, rock climbing and hunting. This area receives the highest number of recreational user days within the Fort St. James Forest District.

Secondary Role
The secondary role of Mount Pope Provincial Park is to protect regionally and provincially significant habitats and landforms associated with steep limestone terrain, and to represent an edaphic climax of Interior Douglas-fir within the Sub-Boreal Spruce biogeoclimatic zone.

Tertiary Role
The park protects a historic trail used to access Mount Pope, an important lookout for natives prior to European contact, and a fire lookout built in the 1890's. The park also protects cultural sites including native pictographs and Simon Fraser's signature.

Known Management Issues	Response
Forest health	• Monitor for mountain pine beetle and Douglas-fir beetle. Fall and burn when there is a high chance of success.
Recreational climbing	• Monitor for impacts on limestone vegetation communities
Invasive species	• Monitor for introduced species
Caves & alkaline soils	• Inventory for any red and/or blue-listed species

Zoning

The entirety of Mount Pope Park (2,030 ha) is zoned Natural Environment (protection of scenic values and provision of backcountry recreation opportunities in a largely undisturbed natural environment).

CONSERVATION

Representation		
• ecosection		Minimal contribution to the representation of the Nechako Lowland and Babine Upland ecosections.
• biogeoclimatic subzone/variant	X	Contributes to the representation of the SBS dw3. Only 4.24% of this variant is protected. Mount Pope contributes 5.72% of the overall protected areas system representation of this variant. The Douglas-fir forests on the south slopes of the mountain are an edaphic climax of this forest type, not normally occurring within the SBS. This ecosystem is regionally significant within the SBS biogeoclimatic zone.
Special Feature	X	Limestone substrate with caves and uncommon habitats for bats, garter snakes, and rare plant species.
Rare/Endangered Values	X	Rare plants inventory
Scientific/Research Opportunities	X	Rare plant study

RECREATION

Representation:		
• backcountry		
• destination	X	Local and regional recreation destination for hiking, viewing, rock climbing and a variety of other activities.
• travel corridor		
• local recreation	X	A primary recreation focus for the community of Fort St. James
Special Opportunities	X	With its viewpoints and natural and cultural features, the park offers potential to appreciate the Fort St. James area within the context of its natural and cultural history.
Education/Interpretation Opportunities	X	Cultural heritage appreciation: early aboriginal use, exploration, fur trade, early settlement and resource use.

CULTURAL HERITAGE

Representation	X	First Nations rock art and lookout. Historic trail and fire lookout location.
Special Feature	X	Simon Fraser signature on rock

OTHER MANAGEMENT CONSIDERATIONS

Other Designations

Relationship to Other PAs	X	While other parks like Carp Lake, and Stuart River, and Eskers provide more substantial representation of the Nechako Lowlands, Mount Pope Provincial Park protects special features associated with the ecosection. The trail and upland-oriented recreation opportunities of Mount Pope Park complement the lake-oriented camping and day use of Sowchea Bay Park and Paaren's Beach Provincial Park at the south end of Stuart Lake.
Co-operative Management Arrangements		
Partnerships		
Vulnerability		The Conservation Risk Assessment Process identified 2 risk factors (the shape and the size of the park) for the park and rated them as low significance. Three stressors/threats were identified for the park: Suburban expansion and caving/climbing were rated as highly significant; and fire suppression which was rated as moderately significant.
Relationship to Other Strategies	X	Fort St. James LRMP recommended protection of this park in March 1999.

Area: 2,030 hectares
Date of establishment: January 25, 2001.

Zoning Map - Mount Pope Provincial Park

Natural Environment
Protected Area Boundary